



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Improving the Health of Our Nation

CDC National Health Report: Leading Causes of Morbidity and Mortality and Associated Behavioral Risk and Protective Factors — United States, 2005-2013

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[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Life expectancy in the U.S. has reached an all-time high, thanks to advances in medical treatments and prevention strategies. However, certain behaviors continue to compromise our health.

Dr. Kathleen Ethier serves in CDC's Office of the Director. She's joining us today to discuss ways to live a longer, healthier life. Welcome to the show, Kathleen.

[Dr. Ethier] Thanks so much for having me.

[Dr. Gaynes] Kathleen, what is the current life expectancy in the U.S.?

[Dr. Ethier] A baby born today can expect to live to be 79 years old, and fewer and fewer people are dying before the age of 80.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are the leading causes of death in the U.S.?

[Dr. Ethier] Well, we're still dying from preventable chronic diseases, so heart disease; cancer; chronic lung disease, which we often know of as COPD; and stroke are all chronic diseases. They're the four leading causes of death and they're all potentially preventable.

We're making very good strides in preventing heart disease and some cancers—so lung cancer, breast cancer, and cervical cancer—but there's certainly more work to be done. We continue to see decreases in heart disease, but a third of those could actually be prevented by making changes in our health habits.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are some of the most important risk factors that can result in poor health?

[Dr. Ethier] Smoking and obesity are the two leading risk factors for most chronic diseases which are the leading causes of death.

[Dr. Gaynes] Kathleen, give our listeners some strategies for improving health outcomes.

[Dr. Ethier] First of all, *don't* smoke. If you are a current smoker, make efforts to quit smoking. And if you are not a current smoker, *don't start*. Smoking is the leading preventable behavior that leads to poor health outcomes. Second, get your weight in check. So eat a healthier diet—add fruits and vegetables, lower your sodium intake, avoid trans fats, and exercise more. So, if you are currently very sedentary, just get up and move around. If you sit a lot at work, get up periodically through the day and walk around. What you ultimately want to do is to move toward 30 minutes of exercise a day. And if you do those things, if you quit smoking if you're a current smoker or don't start smoking, if you eat healthier, and if you exercise, you will prevent many of the chronic diseases and you'll live a longer life.

[Dr. Gaynes] How often should an adult see their health care provider?

[Dr. Ethier] That can vary by age and, depending on the recommended screenings, but, at the very least, you should make sure you have a medical home so that you have a primary care provider that you can see when necessary, and that you get the recommended preventative screenings and vaccinations for your age group. So, getting a yearly flu vaccine, getting recommended cancer screenings, getting your blood pressure and your cholesterol checked regularly can prevent many chronic diseases in the early stages or before they start.

[Dr. Gaynes] Where can listeners get more information about strategies for healthier living?

[Dr. Ethier] Listeners can go to cdc.gov/healthreport, all one word.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Kathleen. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Kathleen Ethier about ways to live a longer and healthier life.

Remember: Quit smoking, eat a healthy diet, and exercise regularly to improve your chances of living a longer and healthier life. Getting checkups and recommended screenings can ensure that problems are identified and treated early.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.